Capital investment in paper industry

1513. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether a massive capital investment will be required for paper industry in the next few years for its 7.1% growth;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any technology upgradation fund similar to textiles is proposed to be provided for paper industry;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) to (e) The paper industry is delicensed under the Industries (Development & Regulation) Act, 1951. In the liberalized economic environment, investment decisions are taken by the entrepreneur based on techno-economic and commercial considerations. The paper industry has registered an average growth of 5.5% during the period 2001-2002 to 2004-2005. There is a need for technology upgradation of the Indian paper idnustry, on a continuous basis, to increase its competitiveness.

Steps to improve tobacco exports

1514. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government has not taken adequate steps to improve tobacco exports;

(b) if so, whether it is also a fact that Government is not making Virginia tobacco grown in Andhra Pradesh competitive for international export markets;

(c) what are the steps proposed by Government to increase the export potential of tobacco from the country; and

(d) the specific plans for he rest of this fiscal year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) and (b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) The Tobacco Board is implementing several extension and developmental programes such as model project areas, integrated pest management etc. to enhance the quality and production fo tobacco to meet the changing international demands. The concerns of international customers are addressed in a focussed manner to train and educate growers to meet global standards.

Pre-Hong Kong Consultations

1515. SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government, in association with some international organisations has held pre-Hong Kong Ministerial consultations with the stakeholders;

(b) if so, the etails of events and that of participants thereof;

(c) whether Govemment has identified some issues which emerged out of these consultations; and

(d) what is the response of Government to the issues raised by the stakeholders in these consultations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Towards evolving India's negotiating strategies and position in the negotiatiosn launched at Doha in 2001, the Government has been holding consultations with stakeholders from time to time, including a series of consultation workshops and seminars organized jointly with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) between June through Nobvember 2005 at New Delhi as a part of Government's preparations for the forthcoming Ministerial Meeting of the World Trade Organization at Hong Kong, China, on 13—18 December 2005. Open notices were issued to invite information and participation from non-governmental organizations, farmes' associations, industry representatives, research institutions, economists, consumer organisations, and any other interested party.